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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 000814

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [KNNP](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: FM SHEIKH ABDULLAH ON HAMAS, GCC

REF: ABU DHABI 779

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MICHELE J. SISON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) Summary: On March 2, Ambassador spoke with FM Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan (AbZ) about the recent visit of Palestinian Authority (PA) leader Mahmoud Abbas (reftel), and the GCC-Yemen Foreign Ministers meeting held in Riyadh on March 1. Sheikh Abdullah contradicted the report of PA Ambassador-designate Aloridi, stating that the UAEG had not/not agreed to fund the PA's April salaries. He further stated that the UAEG has discouraged Hamas leader Khalid Mishal from coming to the UAE for a visit. Ambassador encouraged Sheikh Abdullah to press forward on joining the Proliferation Security Initiative, noting that doing so would highlight how seriously the UAEG viewed counter-proliferation. The FM reported that the GCC had agreed to a "phase-in period" of about 10 years before Yemen could join the GCC. End Summary.

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Palestinian Issues  
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2. (C) Abdullah told Ambassador that, as reported reftel, the UAEG discussed the PA's current cash crunch at length during Abbas' recent visit. Contrary to reports from Palestinian Ambassador Designate Khairi Aloridi, Sheikh Abdullah stated that the UAEG has not/not committed to fund the April salaries for the interim Palestinian government, commenting that Aloridi may have "heard what he wanted to hear". Abdullah confirmed that UAE's humanitarian programs would continue, as Mohammed bin Zayed (MbZ) had told Ambassador weeks ago, but that any assistance would go through Abbas' office and not/not through Hamas.

3. (C) Staying on the topic of Hamas, the FM noted that prominent PA leader Khalid Mishal has been asking to make an official visit to the UAE. Sheikh Abdullah stated that the UAEG has discouraged a visit by Mishal or "others like that" ( which Ambassador took to mean the radicalized external leadership of the PA) but would likely welcome an official PA ministerial visit once a new government is formed. According to Abdullah, Mishal claims that he is going to be welcomed in Riyadh.

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PSI  
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4. (C) Ambassador asked the FM to press forward on a UAEG agreement to PSI, noting that joining PSI would help highlight how seriously the UAEG took counter-proliferation concerns. AbZ stated that the USG should expect a "positive response."

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GCC/Arab League  
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5. (C) During the Secretary's recent visit to the UAE, the GCC FMs agreed to discuss Yemen's desire to join the GCC in an upcoming meeting, said Sheikh Abdullah. On March 1, the FMs met in Riyadh and decided that a phase-in period of some ten years would be advisable, with support being provided to improve Yemen's "indicators and ratios." The GCC communicated this position to the Yemeni FM who, according to Abdullah, "took it as an insult." On another matter, Abdullah added that he continued to take heat for the forward-leaning joint US-GCC statement that was drafted during the Secretary's visit. The FM also reported that he would not be attending the Cairo Arab League FM session on March 4-5, but would be sending MinState for Foreign Affairs Mohammed al-Sha'ali instead.

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Other Topics  
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6. (C) AbZ reported that he had heard rumors that USTR might cancel the mid-March FTA negotiations in Abu Dhabi, to which the Ambassador responded that plans continued to move forward on the negotiations. Ambassador inquired when UAE Ambassador-designate to the US, Saqr Ghobash, would depart for Washington, noting that his arrival was of key importance in the UAE communicating its position on Capitol Hill during these challenging times. Abdullah stated that Ghobash would depart on March 6, and arrive in DC on March 10.  
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